

Because mass media are, as I have suggested, multi-contextual, the student must not only investigate the finished product, but must come to terms with the whole creative process. Assessing the appearance of "Sing a Song of Sixpence" in a margarine ad may involve tracking down the advertising agency and asking why they used a traditional song for their pitch. Correctly assessing the traditionality of "Listen to the Mockingbird" involves having some knowledge of what happens to the tune when played by the same musicians in other contexts.

I do not wish to suggest that such problems are overwhelming. In fact they are a challenge. For the folklorist the usefulness of the multi-context phenomena in mass culture lies in the fact that it tends to fragment the creative process, thus making it more accessible to us. All this may lead us away from "true" folklore events, but on the other hand, it may give us some perspective on creative processes in contemporary society.

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NOTES

- 1 Folklore Forum, II(1969), 90-105.
- 2 See John Godrich and R.M.W. Dixon, Blues and Gospel Records, 1902-1942, second edition (Bexhill-On-Sea, England, 1969).
- 3 Burns, 91.
- 4 See L. Mayne Smith, "An Introduction to Bluegrass," Journal of American Folklore, LXXVII(1965), 245-256; a more extended discussion by the same author is his unpublished Indiana University Master's Thesis, "Bluegrass Music and Musicians" (1964).
- 5 Neil V. Rosenberg, "From Sound to Style: The Emergence of Bluegrass," Journal of American Folklore, LXXX(1967), 148-9.
- 6 Constance Rourke's American Humor (New York, 1931) traces the development of such figures in early American stage traditions.

OUR READERS WRITE: "A THIRD WAY"

Dear Sirs:

So, do you expect us to believe that "A third way" just APPEARED one day? Mysteriously, you say? And it means nothing? Who do you think we are? Who do you think YOU are? Such Greenwaysque paranoia is not seemly.

Disappointedly,
A Reader

Dear Reader: The stencils for that issue were prepared by a trusted typist. Betwixt typing and printing they never left the hands of your truly baffled editors. The mimeographers have been in our employ for many long years. --EDS.